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Foundations of College Writing – Dr. Sherry

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Instate students vs. Out-of-State Students

**Problem**

Some people think deciding where to go to college may be an easy decision but there are many roles that partake in this decision. One question students have to ask themselves is, “Am I going to stay close to home in familiar territory or leave the state and branch out?” This is an immense decision students that are going to enter their freshmen year of college have to make. While making this decision students have to consider factors such as tuition rates, if they are truly ready to leave home since for most it is the first time, and where they want to be for location. But, how does being an instate college student versus an out of state student truly affect your college experience? In this paper I first will provide background information other researchers have done on this topic. They researched advantages of staying instate vs. leaving the state, tuition rates between states for state schools and private schools and the migration rates for people that stay in state or choose to leave for the first time. Next, I will talk about my method of how I am going to research this topic and use the previous research to better my newly found information. Then, I will produce my own findings based off of interviews and share them in a conclusion based on college freshman at Bloomsburg University.

**Background**

Some studies have focused on instate students going to college versus out of state students. One study in particular was an interview where someone was asked questions based on the advantages of going to college instate versus going to college out of state. “When it comes time for students to start narrowing down their list of colleges to apply to, one issue always presents itself: whether to leave home for newfound independence and go to school out of state, or stay closer to home and reap the benefits of having family close by” (Unigo 1). (1)

“It’s all about your college state of mind,” said the interviewee. Important components to consider while making the crucial decision of where to attend school is location such as being in a city, rural setting or town, the weather, and how often one wants to go home. If you leave the state you gain more independence, can become more confident in being on your own and are facing new challenges. Where as some advantages of staying instate is having family closer by or the simple fact of knowing you do have family closer by, the tuition is cheaper and for some it is just a simply essential that you stay instate for personal reasons (Unigo 1). (2)

The cost of college is a tremendous factor that comes into play when making your decision where to attend. Some are more fortunate then others and can have the option to not go to a state school, others are allowed to go to a state school in any state, some may have to go to a state school in the state they currently live and others may have no limitations at all. The cheapest option seems to be for students to stay instate and go to a public university (“Average undergraduate tuition and fees” 1). For Bloomsburg University, it is cheapest for instate students. For the out of state students that chose to come to Bloomsburg it is cheaper for them to go here then going to a private school but seemingly more expensive then going to a state school in the state they were raised.

In 1996, about 380,000 first time freshman migrated out of state, out of a total of 2.2 million students. This number changed based on the state. For example, in the District of Columbia, 55.2 percent of people left the state for college but only 8.7 percent of the people in Alabama left their state for college. It all depends of where you live and the opportunities you have available to you in the state you were raised in. “Twenty-four states had an increasing percentage of first-time students leaving the state to attend college” (“Residence and Migration” 1-2). In other words about half of the United States at this time were willing to and had the amenities to try experience something different in a new state.

All these factors help someone to make their college decision on what school to attend, but how do they affect you once you get there? (3)

**Method**

One article was interview based and showed all the reader’s opinions on the advantages of staying instate for college or going out of state. They directed the attention of the reader to things such as independence and making the best of the situation you are put in. Another article talked strictly about all the different tuition rates in each state and the last article talked about different migration facts. By using all the data found on what advantages there are of going to college instate versus out of state, tuition rates from state to state and migration facts for college freshman, I decided to further this search by asking people, “How does being an instate college student versus an out of state college student affect your college experience?” My goal was to use the data and resources found and study the affects of these above topics on college experience as a whole. For example what if someone was forced to come to Bloomsburg because it was close to home? Or maybe they chose to come here because of that. I interviewed different people asking how they choose to come to Bloomsburg, what they had to consider when making the decision and how that is affecting their college experience now. While at Bloomsburg, does being an instate student or an out of state student affect your college experience and how?

**Findings**

I interviewed ten different students, five out of state and five instate. There were seven questions that I asked to every person no matter where they were from (1). The first question I asked was “How often do you go home?” The majority of out of state students said only on breaks and that they have not been home yet. The students that are from Pennsylvania go home a lot more often than others. It ranged from every three weeks to every five weeks. This shows that you are more likely to go home if you live in Pennsylvania. The second question I asked was, “ What extra curricular activities are you involved in and how many?” The answers ranged for people. It did not matter whether you were an instate student or an out of state student. It was just personality based and based on if you wanted to be active. The amount of activities involved in ranged from none to six. The third question I asked was, “Do your friends tend to be from Pennsylvania or out of state?” Three of the instate students said their friends tend to be from instate where two said they were from both instate and out of state. For the five out of state students the answers ranged completely from being friends with both, having the majority of friends from instate and then also having the majority of friends out of state. The next question asked was, “Is money something you have to consider while at college?” Seven of the ten people said yes money is something they have to worry about. The three individuals who said no or not really were both from out of state or instate so for this particular question it did not matter where you were from. Money can affect everyone whether instate or out. The fifth question asked was, “ What were the deciding factors for coming to Bloomsburg?” Everyone’s answer varied however, a lot had similarities. Most people said they loved the campus or environment, some talked about affordability while others mentioned that Bloomsburg was a good fit for them because of their major. One student in particular said, “They had to have both my majors, the extra curricular activities that I wanted like the option to be in a sorority, a nice campus and it had to be affordable.” The next question I asked people was, “Do students care whether you are an instate student or an out of state student?” All ten students said that it does not matter where you are from. This shows Bloomsburg University has a very accepting student body. People do not care about ones background or where they came from. The last question I asked students was the main question my whole project is about. “Do you think being an instate or out of state student can affect your college experience?” (3) The best answer was, “If your instate you could be tempted to go home to much but if your out of state you could really get home sick and not have the opportunity to go home. If you go home to much you missing out on all of the fun you could have at college but if you don’t go home at all you could end up being super home sick and not want to do anything anyway. I guess it depends on the circumstances.”

**Conclusion**

Based on the answers of the people I interviewed, I came to the conclusion that being an instate student or an out of state student can affect ones college experience to an extent. For example, out of state students are more likely to stay on campus during the weekends so they have more of an opportunity to meet new people and socialize where as since instate students go home more often they may not have as much of an opportunity. It depends on how often they go home though. Out of state students may end up more homesick but when asked as long as they kept busy it went away after a while.

In reality however it is based on how much effort the individual puts into their college experience. If you try to meet people and join activities or if money is not an issue it might be easier to meet people because you can have more of a variety of activities you can join such as Greek life or clubs that have dues. If you are willing to try new things, be adventurous and put yourself out there, being an in state or out of state student should not matter. Everyone interviewed said the student body population did not care whether students were in state or out of state.

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